

The Croydon Chronicle

N E W S L E T T E R

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Friday, Oct. 19
6-8 p.m.

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Road
(off Baltimore Road)
Rockville, MD 20851
240-314-8770
[www.rockvillemd.gov/
croydoncreek](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek)



Letter from the Supervisor

I always look forward to fall. It's probably because, as a child, I was excited for the start of the school year. Fresh notebooks and new pencils were something that I eagerly anticipated along with new classes and meeting my teachers. It's nerdy but true. Now that my school days are far behind me, I enjoy fall because it is a time of change. Caterpillars have metamorphosed to butterflies, leaves shift their colors and the day changes as the sun sets earlier and temperatures lazily drop. Noticing these changes makes my job as a naturalist enjoyable; teaching others about these changes makes my job fulfilling.

One of my favorite programs at CCNC is Nature Tots because it provides toddlers and their caregivers opportunities to explore their changing environment with a combination of self-guided and naturalist-led activities. Little ones are born naturalists with an innate curiosity about most everything they see, and this program stimulates their inquisitive minds with a variety of hands-on and minds-on components while

allowing time for socialization. Topics are seasonal, which enhances participant experience by giving them opportunities to explore on their own outside of class. It is one of our most popular programs, and we hope to introduce more visitors to it in the coming year.

We are also offering a new slate of Citizen Science programs to stimulate interest in scientific research. Our Growing Native Project is a great way for all ages to test the waters of Citizen Science and learn how to contribute to current research in a meaningful way.

As always, we welcome any feedback you may have about CCNC or our programs. Please let us know if there are programs you would like us to offer or particular things you enjoy about the center. We look forward to seeing you this fall!

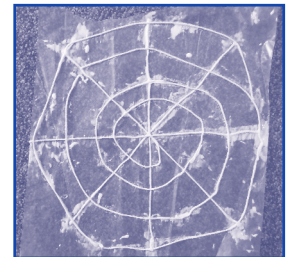
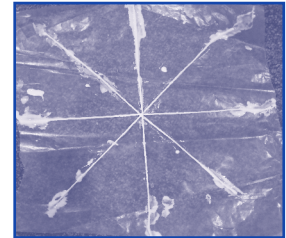
Kind regards,
Elissa Totin
Nature Center Supervisor

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically please provide your email address to the Nature Center at NatureCenter@rockvillemd.gov.

Kids Craft: Yarn Spider Webs

Supplies: Large section of waxed paper, 6 – 12 inch pieces of yarn, white glue

1. Dunk each piece of yarn in the glue, squeezing off excess glue by running the yarn between 2 fingers.
2. Lay four of the pieces of yarn on the waxed paper across an imaginary center spot to create an eight legged spoke. Do not smooth the glue covered yarn to the waxed paper.
3. Dunk the last two pieces of yarn in the glue and spiral them around the spokes making sure to overlap where one piece ends and the other begins.
4. Set aside webs to dry overnight.
5. Reinforce the intersections of the yarn with more glue if necessary.
6. When dry, carefully remove from the waxed paper and hang.



Citizen Science

Imagine you are a scientist with a research project that you need monthly, weekly or daily data points for, from all over the world. You can't possibly be everywhere at once and you can only hire a few people. Citizen scientists are everyday people who contribute to important scientific research all over the world.

While citizen science has been traditionally called, "public participation in scientific research," it actually infinitely extends the observational powers of trained scientists. For the citizen scientist however, it is a meaningful and fun way to connect with the world and participate in important scientific studies.

Frank Chapman, one of the original developers of the concept of citizen science, was an ornithologist and the curator of mammals and birds at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, in the early 1900's. He did not like the traditional concept of a bird hunt, a competition that involved shooting as many birds possible. Instead, he organized his fellow citizens for a bird count. This was the beginning of one of the longest running citizen science projects and traditions, The Christmas Bird Count. Today it is sponsored by the National

Audubon Society and held every December, all over the world.

It is easy to become a citizen scientist. No matter your interests, there are projects in which you can participate. Croydon Creek Nature Center (CCNC) is participating in several upcoming citizen science projects, and we invite you to participate along with us. Check out our program listing for upcoming citizen science projects at CCNC.

Croydon Creep
at the Nature Center
Friday, Oct. 19 from 6-8 p.m.
Spooky Nature Hike • Magic Show
Hands-On Activities and Games
All Ages Welcome, \$2 per person at the door
Children under two are free

Keeping an Aquatic Turtle as a Pet

By: Melinda Norton

One of the most common types of turtles to keep as a pet is the Red-eared Slider (*Chrysemys scripta elegans*). It is a semi-aquatic turtle found in the wild in Maryland and is commonly sold in pet stores. These turtles are strong swimmers and can often be seen basking in ponds around the Rockville area. Their life expectancy is 40-50 years.

In order to keep a Red-eared Slider as a healthy pet, the owner must be very mindful of heat, light sources, clean water and a healthy and varied diet. Properly caring for a turtle can be rewarding but is also time consuming and requires careful monitoring of habitat and food intake to insure that the turtle remains healthy.

Housing Requirements

Although your Red-eared Slider may start out small (it is illegal for pet stores to sell you a turtle that is under 4 inches in length), it can grow to be about 12 inches in length, so when purchasing an aquarium for your turtle, bigger is always better to avoid having to purchase several over the lifetime of your turtle. Eventually your turtle could require a tank as large as 75-125 gallons. Aquariums come in both glass and acrylic, however glass is recommended as acrylic can scratch easily.

Red-eared Sliders are semi-aquatic turtles which means that they need a place to get out of the water to bask and completely dry their shell out. The basking area should be heated from above with a basking light. There are several options for making a basking area including floating docks, plexiglass inserts or driftwood. Whatever material you choose for the basking area, it needs to be smooth and without sharp edges. Sharp edges can cut into the turtle's shell, which can eventually cause infection and disease as a turtle's shell is live bone tissue. Red-eared Sliders are strong swimmers and can handle having their water fairly deep, however they do need areas to rest underwater.

Heat and Light Requirements

Since Red-eared Sliders are exothermic (or cold-blooded) they depend on getting their heat from outside sources. If the proper temperature is not

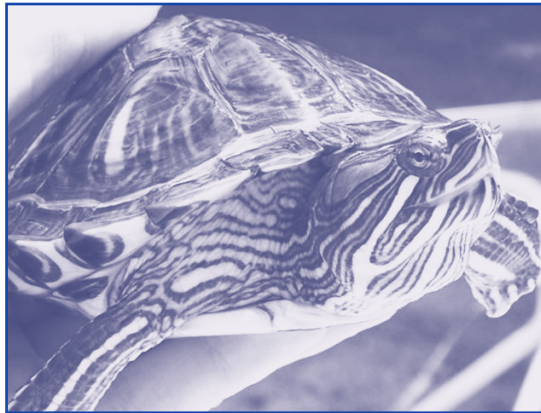
maintained it will cause the animal's metabolism and digestion to slow, which can be detrimental to the turtle. The room in which the aquarium is located should remain around 72 degrees. Water temperature should be kept around 78-86 degrees with a submersible heater. To determine the strength of heater that you need, you will need to approximate the number of gallons of water in your tank. It takes about 5 watts for every gallon of water in the tank to heat properly. The basking area can be lit with a 65-75 watt incandescent bulb and should be kept at 85-90 degrees closest to the bulb.

In order to remain healthy, Red-eared Sliders need to have exposure to full-spectrum light 10-12 hours per day. Full-spectrum (UV-A and UV-B) light bulbs come in many brands and can be purchased at most pet stores. In order to remain effective these light bulbs must be changed every 6-8 months even if they are not burned out because they eventually lose their ability to emit full-spectrum light. The full-spectrum light should be placed 18-24 inches from the turtle and should shine directly on them. Glass and plastic filter out the UV-A and UV-B light. It is also important that your turtle have a consistent day-night lighting cycle, so it is also a good idea to put your lights on a timer. Although turtles need the benefits of being in the sun, you should never place a turtle tank directly in the sun because it is impossible to control the temperature.

Water

Water temperature and quality are critical to the health of your turtle. The water becomes very dirty quickly because of uneaten food items, urine and feces. All of these things increase the growth of bacteria and other organisms which are very unhealthy for your turtle. To avoid this happening, water must be changed on a regular basis. Depending on the size of your aquarium and quality of your filter, water needs to be changed every one to two weeks. After changing the water, make sure that the temperature is correct before returning the turtle to its enclosure. A dechlorinating agent should also be used to treat the water before returning the turtle to the water.

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To keep the water clean and moving between water changes, a filter is also necessary. It is best to use a canister filter that is either inside of the tank or one that sits outside of the tank. These filters not only remove the debris from the water but also neutralize bacteria.

Diet

Red-eared Sliders are omnivores; they eat both meat and plants. A varied diet is crucial to maintain a healthy turtle. It is important to not just rely on commercial pellets as the only food source. Some examples of good food sources for Red-eared Sliders are worms, live feeder fish, crickets, superworms, pinkie mice, as well as commercial floating aquatic turtle pellets, water cress, kale, romaine lettuce and spinach.

Red-eared Sliders can make good pets, but keeping them healthy is not easy. Unlike a dog, turtles do not require walks. However, providing proper food, habitat and veterinary care is imperative to the quality of life of the turtle and does take time and attention. There are many turtles available for adoption because the owners did not understand the scope of providing for a turtle. So, before purchasing a turtle, give it

careful consideration, and then think about contacting a turtle rescue like the Mid-Atlantic Turtle and Tortoise Society (<http://www.midatlanticturtles.org/>) to give an abandoned turtle a much needed home. It is never a good idea to take a turtle out of its natural habitat. And remember, if you decide that getting a turtle seems like too much work, you are always welcome to visit the many turtles that live at Croydon Creek.

Costs:	
Tank (with fluorescent light hood)	\$600
Full-spectrum UV light bulbs	\$25 each
Basking light fixture and bulbs	\$20
Filters	\$100 each
Tank Heater	\$30
Thermometer	\$10
Basking platform	\$20
Dechlorinating agent	\$10
Food per week	\$10

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Programs

Fall 2012

All programs take place at Croydon Creek Nature Center

Cinnamon Wreaths

Make a fragrant wreath from cinnamon sticks to decorate your home this winter. All materials provided. Advanced registration required by: 11/19.

Age: 10+

41135 Su 12/2 2-3 PM \$16/\$20

Citizen Science Series

This ongoing series will introduce participants to different citizen science opportunities in our area. Find out how you can contribute to valuable scientific studies and spend time outdoors.

Age: 5+

Project Squirrel

Squirrels are everywhere and almost anyone can identify them. Discover new information about this familiar backyard mammal, make a craft and find out how you can easily become a local squirrel monitor.

41112 Su 10/14 1-2:30 PM \$6/\$8



Croydon Creek Campfire

Gather around the campfire at Croydon Creek Nature Center with your friends for stories, snacks and more. An adult must accompany children and all participants must register. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs for seating.

All Ages

Nocturnal Animals

Ever wonder what goes bump in the night or whose eyes you see shining back at you in your headlights? Gather around the campfire to learn about some animals that might be out and about at night in your neighborhood.

41106 Sa 11/17 6-7 PM \$4/\$5

Go Green Lecture Series

Co-sponsored by the Nature Center and the City's Environmental Management Division, this lecture series offers you easy ways to make a positive impact on your environment. Advance registration required.

Age: 16+

"YERT"

Your Environmental Road Trip is an environmental documentary that's NOT depressing. Called to action by a planet in crisis, these friends hit the road with hope, humor and all of their trash. Note: screening of this documentary will last two hours.

41099 W 10/24 7-9 PM Free

Croydon Creep at the Nature Center Friday, Oct. 19 from 6-8 p.m.

Spooky Nature Hike • Magic Show
Hands-On Activities and Games
All Ages Welcome, \$2 per person at the door
Children under two are free

Growing Native Project

Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds can participate in Growing Native by collecting native tree seeds across the region. Not only are participants creating forests for tomorrow, they are also learning the important connection between healthy, forested lands and clean waters. Advance registration required. Participants under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult. SSL hours will be awarded.

Age: 6+

41136 Su 10/21 1:30-3 PM Free

Hooray for Homeschoolers!

Croydon Creek Nature Center presents a series of programs offered specifically for our homeschooling friends. Each program consists of hands-on and minds-on activities that include both time in our classroom laboratory along with activities and hikes outdoors.

Age: 8-15

Adaptation Adventures

Did you know that beavers can close off their nostrils and ears as they are swimming underwater or that a woodpecker's tongue is so long that it wraps around its brain? Animals have many adaptations that help them survive and thrive in their environments. Join us to learn more about animal adaptations and participate in the adaptation relay.

41102 F 10/12 1-3 PM \$6/\$8

Geology Rocks

By studying geology we can learn more about the Earth's history. Learn how scientists classify rocks and perform geologic experiments to investigate rock samples. After, we will take a hike to learn about the geology of Croydon Creek.

41103 F 11/16 1-3 PM \$6/\$8

Natural Holiday Crafts

Spend the morning using a variety of natural or recycled objects to make holiday crafts and ornaments. Each participant will complete at least three projects. Adult participation required for children under age 8. Register by: 11/28.

Age: 3-10

41134 Sa 12/1 10 AM-12 PM
\$8/\$10

Nature Tots

Spend time with your child discovering the wonders of nature. A Naturalist will help you explore a new nature topic through nature play, crafts, stories and hikes. Dress for the weather. This program is intended to provide special one-on-one time for you and your child.

Age: 2-5 • 10-11:30 AM • \$8/\$10

Squirrels - 41086 - Th - 10/4

Bats - 41087 - Th - 10/18

Nuts and Seeds - 41088 - Th - 11/1

Trees - 41089 - Th - 11/15

Mammals - 41090 - Th - 11/29

Rocks Rock - 41091 - Th - 12/13

Volunteer Opportunities Available!

Are you an adult that enjoys spending time outdoors or a student looking to earn SSL hours? Croydon Creek Nature Center has volunteer opportunities available for anyone over the age of 14. Openings include trail maintenance, contributing to ongoing citizen science projects, front desk work, program preparation and animal care. Call 240-314-8770 or email NatureCenter@rockvillemd.gov for more info.

Saturday Story and Hike

Stop by the Nature Center for story time and a hike. Our Naturalist will read a story and lead a hike based on the story. Dress for the weather. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Age: 2-5

41095 Sa 9/29 10-11 AM \$3/\$5
41096 Sa 10/27 10-11 AM \$3/\$5
41097 Sa 11/17 10-11 AM \$3/\$5

Star Party

Join us to learn about the stars in the fall sky. Discover objects easily visible in the night sky, look through telescopes with an astronomer and enjoy a campfire treat. All participants must register.

Age: 5+

41101 Sa 10/27 6:30-7:30 PM \$5/\$6

SCOUT BADGE DAYS

WEBELOS FORESTER BADGE

Sat., Oct. 13

WEBELOS NATURALIST BADGE

Sat., Nov. 3

10 a.m.-noon or 2-4 p.m.

Naturalists will help you complete the necessary requirements to achieve the badges.

All materials provided; however, badges are not supplied by the Nature Center.

Programs held rain or shine.
Dress for the weather.

Cost: \$14 residents;
\$16 non-residents

For additional information or to register, call Melinda Norton at 240-314-8771.